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If this interpretation be accepted it offers a certain amount of independent evidence of the existence of an allegory, for such a dedication would very properly lead one to suspect, on mere *a priori* grounds, that the poem carried a double meaning. When, in addition to this *a priori* evidence, we have very strong *a posteriori* evidence, namely, an explanation of the allegory that accords admirably with the details of the poem, with the time at which, on other grounds, it is likely to have been composed, and with the known facts of Chaucer's relations with Richard II and the court, we may justly say that Koch's theory as modified by Prof. Emerson rests upon grounds of proof that come little short of amounting to a demonstration.

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#### THE ALLEGORY IN LYLY'S *ENDIMION*.

It is probable that most readers of Professor Feuillerat's splendid new book on John Lyly (Cambridge University Press, 1910) will feel genuine disappointment and vexation when they come to the chapter in which he treats the play of *Endimion* (*Première Partie* VII, pp. 141-190). That a critic so deeply learned and so charming in expression should lend the weight of his deserved

authority to the fantastic interpretation there promulgated of the allegory in the play seems not only a misfortune to the many who will gain pleasure from his volume, but a veritable obstruction to the progress of the scientific scholarship which he elsewhere advances so notably.

During the last twenty years several hundreds of pages have been filled with explanations of the personal symbolism in *Endimion*, all mutually antagonistic and, it seems to me, fatally super-subtle. During these years, Lyly criticism has run wild through the same chaos of unbased and over-refined conjecture which made up much of the Shakespeare criticism of the eighteenth century; till it is hardly surprising that several writers—notably the late Professor Morley and Mr. Percy W. Long—have closed their eyes in disgust upon the whole problem and declined to admit that any personal allegory exists. Professor Feuillerat's interpretation, supplanting those of Halpin, of Professor Baker, and of Mr. Bond, is the most ingeniously worked out and the most eloquently delivered of all; equally, it is the most astounding and the one most contradictory of what we know or can reasonably infer concerning the purpose and nature of the play.

The Reverend N. J. Halpin first suggested, in 1843, that *Endimion* is an allegory of court life, portraying fashionable characters of the day, of whom the most important are Queen Elizabeth (Cynthia), the Earl of Leicester (Endimion), and Leicester's two living wives, Lady Sheffield (Tellus) and Lady Essex (Floscula). In 1894, Professor Baker presented a somewhat different and more ambitious explanation, according to which the piece is to be regarded as a play of political import, written in 1579 in direct championship of the Earl of Leicester. In 1902, Mr. Bond, the editor of Lyly, argued at large in favor of 'widening the scope' of the allegory, and did widen it to the extent of introducing as the prototype of Tellus the personage next in historic conspicuousness to Queen Elizabeth herself—Mary Queen of Scots. And now M. Feuillerat stretches the allegory yet farther, till, retaining Bond's identification of Tellus with Mary, he accomplishes the amazing result of pronouncing Endimion—the lover who sways between Cynthia and Tellus—no less a person than the third political dignitary of the

fehlt eine befriedigende antwort der umworbenen schönen, wenn man auch eine solche aus der haltung des ganzen im voraus entnehmen könnte. Zweitens widersprechen einer solchen auffassung die oben citirten worte: "I rede alway . . . and hope . . . I shal mete sommethyng for to fare the bet . . .," worte, die unmöglich an das ende eines hochzeitscarmen gepasst hätten." (*Englische Studien*, I, 287.)

In the English version of the essay Koch is a little more definite. His chief dicta, omitting what is in substance only what has just been quoted from his first version of the essay, are these: "But if we look at the last stanza [of the *P. of F.*] we see that Chaucer was searching for a new subject to work on" (*Essays on Chaucer*, Chaucer Society, Pt. IV, p. 402). "Supposing the *House of Fame* to be the 'comedy' our poet wished to write, the *Parlament of Foules* would be a prelude of it, a kind of preparation for it. 'I hope,' he says, 'I shal mete something for to fare the bet' (*ibid.*, pp. 403, 404). And finally: '... consulting the last stanza, . . . the concluding words of which would have been no compliment to the dedicatee, we must deny any relation of this sort' " (*ibid.*, p. 405).

age, James of Scotland, Mary's son. Is not this continuous 'widening of the allegory' to include more and more of the figures whose names are writ largest in the text-books of history—when taken in connexion with the extreme ease with which each hypothesis is overthrown by the advocates of the rest—merely a proof that such sober probabilities as really exist are being rapidly dragged out into elemental chaos? Surely, the time has come to take stock of our real knowledge of Lyly's allegorical procedure—to set limits to imaginative speculation, acknowledging the deadly danger of argument from vague parallels—and to put up before the paths which have been proved illusory the warning so frequent and necessary in the field of Shakespeare investigation: 'That way madness lies.'

The reasons which Mr. Bond has offered for his alteration of Halpin's main theory are entirely negligible (see *Lyly*, ed. Bond, III, pp. 88-90); those which Professor Feuillerat now urges in support of his far more sweeping change appear to me most inadmissible. They are just four:

1. Lyly would not have dared, in dramatizing the affair between Leicester and Elizabeth, to portray on the stage the private emotions of the Queen (pp. 148-149).

2. Lyly's purpose in treating this subject could only have been the gaining of Leicester's favor, and Leicester was the open enemy of Lyly's patrons, Burleigh and Oxford (pp. 149, 150).

3. Lyly presents Endimion as young and as having led a solitary life for seven years from love of Cynthia, whereas we know the true Leicester to have been about fifty and a notorious gallant (pp. 151, 152).

4. The incidents of the play do not agree in detail with the actual facts (pp. 152-154).

When Professor Feuillerat asks, with reference to his first point (p. 148): 'Comment peut-on admettre qu'un dramatisle ait été assez audacieux pour mettre à la scène les sentiments les plus intimes, les plus secrets de la reine?' is he not putting a wholly pointless question? Instead of being in any sense an exposé of the Queen's 'most secret sentiments,' the play is an extravagantly adulatory and untruthful denial of a scandal everywhere current; and when Professor Feuillerat tells us

that the Queen and the Master of the Revels would have treated such a bit of coarse flattery about fashionable gossip many years old with less indulgence than the minutely accurate presentation of a contemporary diplomatic intrigue, which he discerns, he involves himself in an assumption certainly not justified either by our knowledge of Elizabeth's character or by the *lèse majesté* principles of the day.

The second objection seems to arise from a misconception of the object of the play. Surely, *Endimion* must not be read as a kind of analogue to *Hernani*—the dramatic mouthpiece of one court party against another. The only ulterior purpose which can be safely predicated of this play or of the other fashionable comedies of the time is direct flattery of Elizabeth; and the fact that Cynthia's lover is here endowed with the indispensable minimum of constancy, amiability, and beauty no more indicates that Lyly was in collusion with the original of his portrait than does the parallel treatment of Phao in *Sapho and Phao* prove a desire in Lyly to advance the fortunes of the departed and hopeless Alençon. Thus, Professor Baker's idea that the play must have been written at the time when it would have done Leicester the most good and Professor Feuillerat's that it cannot refer to Leicester at all because Lyly was not a personal adherent of the latter seem to me equally unfounded.

Professor Feuillerat's last two objections, which together make but a single point, constitute a clear case of the 'hobbling of Pegasus,' so strongly condemned by Professor Morley. How could Lyly present Endimion as anything but young and beautiful, whether he thought of him as the Greek shepherd or as the court favorite and long acknowledged lover of the Queen, with whom Leicester was in point of age a precise contemporary? And as regards Endimion's occasional avowals of his solitary devotion to Cynthia, it is difficult to see how, in the face of his relations to Tellus, he can be held unduly constant or innocent. In any case, the poetic exaltation of Cynthia's lover violates fact far less than that bestowed on Sapho's lover in the parallel play, where the identification of Phao is unquestioned.

I am aware of no indication that Mr. Bond's imaginative explanation of the allegory in *Endi-*

*mion* has been anywhere seriously accepted; and the bolder theory just promulgated by Professor Feuillerat seems still less likely to make its way. In anticipation of further divergent attempts at purely speculative solution of a question which mere speculation will never be able to solve, are we not justified in laying down the following preliminary theses, all apparently well founded in our present knowledge of Lyly's dramatic practice?

1. That the main object of his courtly allegorical plays, apart from the motive of pure art—and presumably the sole object, in the absence of proof to the contrary—was the flattery of Queen Elizabeth.

2. That the character of his allegory was personal and sentimental, rather than diplomatic. *Midas*, a personal satire on Philip II's greed and folly, is no exception to this rule.

3. That Lyly dealt in his allegorical plays only with *faits accomplis*, gracefully eulogizing the Queen upon the outcome of some incident safely past, and never attempting to influence her to specific action or to strengthen one particular party in a controversy as yet undetermined.

4. That the deliberate, continuous symbolism in these plays probably extends only to a very few of the main characters. That Lyly should have put into plays so light, and so clearly intended for oral representation rather than careful reading, an intricate and detailed allegory such as still puzzles students of the *Faery Queene* would appear unreasonable, and is certainly suggested by no evidence.

5. That the author's purpose was certainly not to give an accurate transcript of the incidents he treated. Such procedure would have made the plays either dull or impolitic, or both. Rather, we have to do in each case with a tissue of harmlessly imaginary pictures shot through with idealized references to such actual happenings as the poet might feel to be wholly free from offence to his royal auditors.

For each of the principles above there exists very substantial *prima facie* evidence, and we have every right to insist that critics who in future disregard them take upon themselves a burden of proof far heavier than either Mr. Bond or Professor Feuillerat has been willing to assume.

I believe that most of the students of Lyly who may be impelled by Professor Feuillerat's valuable and interesting book to a thorough reconsideration of the allegorical element in *Endimion* will come to the conclusion that little progress has been made since Halpin's day toward the establishment of the real truth of the matter. The sane interpretation seems still the obvious one, which Halpin pointed out, that this play agrees with *Sapho and Phao* in being a highly poetic and idealized version, flattering to Elizabeth, of a past love adventure, where Cynthia stands for the Queen, Endimion for Leicester, and Tellus for Leicester's wife—rather the third wife, Lettice Countess of Essex, as Mr. Baker suggests, and as Mr. Halpin would probably have willingly granted, than his second wife, Lady Sheffield. In the years just before and after 1579, this affair had been very acute; but in 1585–6, when *Endimion* seems to have been written, the crisis was well past. Leicester had apparently abjured his exorbitant ambition for the Queen's personal favor, Elizabeth's anger at his secret marriage had cooled, and the earl was at the moment engaged in military service in the Low Countries.

There seems, then, good cause to regard *Endimion* as a loose, but infinitely tactful and graceful sketch of the relations of Elizabeth and Leicester previous to 1585. Leicester's presumptuous pursuit of the celestial beauty, and his juggling between Tellus and Cynthia, are punished by that mistrust on the part of the sovereign which actually existed strongly for several years after 1579, and to which the play alludes repeatedly (*Endimion*, ed. Bond, I. iv, 40–44; II. i, 27–30; II. iii, 2, 3; IV. i, 15, 16; IV. iii, 79–81). The consequences are represented in the sleep into which Endimion falls, thus losing the youthful beauty naturally belonging to him as Elizabeth's avowed lover, and lying dead (*i. e.*, disgraced at court) till his overweening arrogance has been chastened, when the magnanimity of Eumenides and the lofty compassion of Cynthia restore him to purely political and impersonal favor. Meantime, Cynthia is, of course, presented—as the Queen would demand to appear, and as Shakespeare also paints her—as continuing through the play 'in maiden meditation fancy-free,' entirely unaware of the overwhelming adoration she has inspired in sublunary breasts.

Three additional considerations, of no very great individual consequence, bear out the interpretation of *Endimion* just given; they appear so obvious that it is strange to find them hitherto overlooked:

1. 'Tellus'—not quite the most natural antonym to 'Cynthia'—is an anagram of Lettice (Lletus), the third wife of Leicester and the immediate cause of his disgrace with Elizabeth in 1579. This fact, which may, of course, be mere accident, is given for what it may be worth.

2. The notes of time in the play are patently fanciful and inconsequent. The forty years' sleep of Endimion (v. i, 50) does not correspond with any alteration in the other mortal figures: it is merely emblematic of Leicester's actual change during the period 1579-1586 from the youthful part of the Queen's lover to the elderly rôle of military general and political adviser. The only reference to time to which specific application can reasonably be attributed is that contained in Endimion's lamentation over Cynthia's disfavor (II. i, 14-22): 'Remember my solitarie life, almost these seauen yeeres: whom haue I entertained but mine owne thoughts, and thy vertues? What companie haue I vsed but contemplation? Whom haue I wondred at but thee? Nay whom haue I not contemned, for thee? Haue I not crept to those on whom I might haue trodden, onelie because thou didst shine vpon them? Haue not iniuries beene sweet to me, if thou vouchsafedst I should beare them? Haue I not spent my golden yeeres in hopes, waxing old with wishing nothing but thy loue.' It is worth noting that 'almost . . . seauen yeeres' is the precise interval between the affair of 1579 and the acting of the play (Feb. 2, 1586?), and the text describes very well Leicester's difficult position during that period. The spending of golden years in hopes and the waxing old are quite out of keeping with the imaginary youthful Endimion, and must, one would suppose, have topical significance.

3. It is very uncritical to read in the play a compliment to the original of Endimion. Surely, the reverse is true. For obvious reasons, dramatic and politic, Lyly could not make his titular hero positively odious; but the inferences from Endimion's relations to Cynthia and Tellus, his foolish ambition, deserved punishment, and final luke-

warm pardon are by no means flattering to that character. The ideal male figure in the play is, evidently, not Endimion but Eumenides; and if one feels confidence to proceed in one's identification beyond the three most important persons, the next natural step will probably be to recognize Lyly's patron Burleigh, only five years senior to Leicester and the Queen, in Eumenides, the faithful servant and counsellor of Cynthia, who reprimands the aspiring Endimion, and afterward by his generosity makes possible the latter's reconciliation with his mistress.

Interpret the allegory as we may—and it seems clear to me that only one reasonable interpretation so far exists—the general purport of *Endimion* remains certain. From the point of view of Cynthia, the play contrasts selfish and unselfish service in Endimion and Eumenides. From the point of view of Endimion, it is the old story of the opposition between earthly and ideal love—the theme suggested by the opening line of Shakespeare's 144th sonnet, 'Two loves I have of comfort and despair.'

This is undoubtedly what the poet saw in his play and what he expected his audience to see. Any attempt to explain the piece as an elaborate parable, not reflecting true love or real personal service, but mystically enshrouding the great political and diplomatic events of the age, involves a complete distortion. It results from viewing sixteenth century life through the inverted perspective of political history, and indicates a failure to apprehend the actual range of interest of Lyly's local, courtly public.

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### THE CURSOR MUNDI AND THE "SOUTHERN PASSION."

In the Cotton MS. of the *Cursor Mundi* a later hand (xv century) has inserted two passages of considerable length, the first treating of the sufferings of Christ on the Cross, and the second of the Resurrection. The description of the MS. given by Dr. Hupe<sup>1</sup> makes it clear that the interpolated

<sup>1</sup> *Cursor Mundi*, E. E. T. S., pp. 124\*-125\*.